



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Swim Lesson Parent Frequently Asked Questions

Drafting Process:

Every participant is placed on a draft – this means that we need a credit card to charge every month for each participant. We draft \$50/member or \$100/non-member on the first business day of the month. When you join in the middle of the month, you pay for the remainder of the month plus the whole next month.

Cancellation Policy:

Lessons are continuous from September – May. If you desire to drop out of lessons for any reason, you need to give us notice, in writing, by the 15th of the month to not draft the following month.

How does my child advance through the stages?

Once you start a stage, your instructor will stay with you and move your child through the stages as they progress. There is no reason to join another stage and change times unless there is unique situation that causes that switch.

What are the ratios per class?

For stages 1-3 the ratio is 1:6, for stages 4-6 the ratio is 1:8

Arrival Time:

On the first day of class please meet on the bleachers. For the rest of the session it is important to be on the pool deck and ready to go 5 minutes before your class time. Children can get anxious if hurried. Please allow plenty of time before class to get dressed, use the restroom, etc. For safety reasons, please do not let children sit poolside unless the instructor is present at the wall. If you are joining midway through a session, please meet at the table on the deck and someone will help guide you to your first class.

Make Up/Sick Policy:

Children who have been ill should be kept at home. This is in the best interest of their health as well as the health of other class participants and the instructor. Although makeups aren't guaranteed, we do have a makeup request form that you can fill out online or at the membership desk and we will make every attempt to offer a make-up class. You are allowed one make up class per month.

Cell Phone Usage:

Taking pictures or videotaping is not allowed in the pool area or any area of the YMCA.

Swimming attire:

Most bathing suits and swim trunks are acceptable. We ask that you make sure that your child's swimwear fits snugly so it will not hinder movement. Children should not attend swim lessons with any type of built-in flotation.

Swimming Accessories; Swim Caps & Goggles:

We welcome and encourage this! For swimmers with long hair, we ask that it be tied back away from the face with a rubber band so it does not interfere with learning to breathe. For the beginner swimmer, goggles can present a false sense of safety. If your swimmer feels that they need goggles, they may bring them; however, for safety reasons a portion of lessons will be spent encouraging participants to be comfortable without goggles. (for Stages 1 and 2).

Locker Room Policy:

The women and men's locker rooms are for ages 18 and older. Please do not bring your children in those locker rooms. We have a family locker room that you may use. Please do not reserve those rooms as all should be able to access them. The locker rooms we recommend our families to use are the boys and girls locker rooms. They can be used as a family locker room. We ask that adults refrain from changing in public in all three locker rooms – family, boys and girls unless they are in a closed stall.

Bathroom Use:

We encourage all participants to arrive early enough to use the restroom before class begins. For all participants who are not potty trained, we require the use of plastic swim diapers worn over a regular diaper. For children who are not comfortable using the restroom on their own, we ask that you remain on the pool deck in the event that your child needs to use the restroom. For sanitary reasons, please do not change diapers on the pool deck – diaper changing stations are available in the locker rooms.

How long will it take my child to learn how to swim?

The YMCA uses a developmental series of steps in a natural progression working towards mastering the following skills: water adjustment, buoyancy, body position, arm and leg development, forward movement and ending with stroke technique. In general, each child's readiness is influenced by physical development, previous experiences and behavioral maturity. The rate at which a child progresses is based on their individual development in addition to time spent working on skills outside of class. *As a reminder, if you are planning on spending time in our pool before or after your scheduled lesson, you must be a YMCA member. Program Participants are welcome to purchase a day pass at any time.

If I would like to talk with someone, who should I approach and when?

We invite you to participate in your child's swim lesson experience. Please introduce yourself to your child's instructor; however, we ask that you limit your questions/concerns before, during and after class as it may pose a distraction to the class in addition to creating a safety issue. We have a manager on deck that is almost always available to speak with you. Since we only see your child for a short time, we need your assistance helping us understand personality traits that may inhibit your child's performance. If a staff member is not available, please leave your name and phone number at the Membership Desk with any concerns and a program director will contact you. For the safety of our members using the pool, please do not bring concerns to a lifeguard.

Is my child in the right stage?

On the first day of every swim lesson session, we evaluate each child to ensure proper class placement. In an effort to establish more consistent stages, your child may be evaluated at a higher or lower stage than they previously participated in. We ask you to support this effort to ensure all of our participants have the greatest chance for success. If you feel that your child is not performing to their ability or that your child's stage is inaccurate, please consult with us.



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Why do I see my child playing or sitting on the side when they should be learning how to swim?

Unlike other swim lesson programs, we pride ourselves in teaching the basic building blocks of swimming through four additional components: character development, personal safety, rescue and water sports/games. We see play as an important part of learning for children. Through games your child will gain considerable knowledge and skill development by staying engaged. Our goal is to develop a well-rounded swimmer, not just one with perfect technique.

Why is my child practicing jumping in the water?

The program builds upon individual skills to create two core skill sequences to help children be safe in and around water: swim, float, swim and jump, push, turn, grab. In swim, float, swim skill sequence, children swim a short distance on their front, turn to their back to float, then turn to their front to continue swimming, if they are able. Rolling onto their back periodically allows them to rest and breathe. The sequence helps children stay afloat until someone arrives to help them or they are able to get to safety using the combined skills. In jump, push, turn, grab skill sequence, a child jumps into the water, pushes off the bottom, turns around to face the wall, grabs the wall, and safely exits the pool. The sequence simulates the experience children have if they are submerged in water unexpectedly. After learning the sequence, children have the skills to get back to the side of the pool or to safety.

Why does my child work on the same thing every day?

Repetition is the key to learning for most young children. Repeating games and skills give children something to look forward to. Swim Lesson participants also feel a greater sense of success by mastering a skill they have been replicating.

What do I do if my child is crying or won't get in the water?

Rest assured that it is not unusual to see tears and hear crying. Most often children experience fear due to separation anxiety or the overwhelming feeling caused by the pool environment. We ask that you trust our staff in helping your child overcome their fear. We encourage apprehensive children to continue attending swim lessons in that they may actually regress if they do not actively participate in class. The more often your child is active in the water, the less chance they will have of developing an irreversible fear of swimming. Please understand that if your child continues having difficulty adjusting to swim lessons, we may ask that you step out of sight so they can build a relationship with their instructor or recommend a parent to join in the child's class, depending on the situation.

What do I do if my child is misbehaving?

Most all disciplinary problems are addressed and taken care of by either our swim instructors or our Department heads. We use positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate class behavior such as self-identification of the problem, warnings and time-outs. If our instructor does not have success with this approach we may approach you in an effort to find a better method that is more effective for your child. We ask that you teach, talk about and review appropriate class behavior and pool rules with your child. We encourage our parents to lead by example and to help children understand "respect" for the water, classmates and instructors.

What can I do to ensure my child will learn to swim and pass their stage?

We do not establish passing or failing a stage as our primary definition of success. Failing does not apply to swim lessons as children are always making improvements. We consider learning to swim as a never ending process and as a chance to help encourage motor, language, social skills and emotional development. The rate at which a child progresses through our program is largely based on the amount of time spent working on skills outside of class. It is extremely normal for a child to remain in a class for months at a time. Do not get discouraged and give up on lessons if your child is not promoted. We want to make sure that we give our swimmers the greatest chance of continuing through our program successfully. If you have questions regarding your child's stage, please speak with us. The best and most appropriate role a swim lesson parent can pursue is practicing and playing in the water with your child as often as you can. Attending class on a regular basis is necessary to your child's progress. Understand that all practice does not have to be in the pool. A great way to enhance your child's swim lesson experience is by practicing skills at home – most of which can be done in the absence of water and use of our homework cards.

Please feel free to reach out to Jammie Meyer, Aquatics Director at jmeyer@ymcachicago.org or 847-410-5383 and Joe Dicks, Aquatics Team Lead at jdicks@ymcachicago.org or 847-410-5365 with any other questions.